

2003-2004 GRAND JURY REPORT

Riverside County Human Resources Department

Background

In September of 1997, the Assistant County Executive Officer/Human Resources Director conducted an assessment of the personnel department functions and the relationship of the department to other county agencies and their personnel units. On November 17, 1997, the current Riverside County Human Resources Department (HR) was re-organized. In 1999, the HR became a centralized model with a staff of 153 employees, whose job was to offer services to department directors in the governmental operations of the county.

Riverside County has approximately 19,000 employees that provide a full range of services to 1.75 million citizens. HR currently has a staff of 170 employees and a **total** budget for fiscal year 2003-2004 of \$239,753,301.

The 1999 re-organization initiated the *"Team Concept"*, creating "Team Concept Specialty Units", supervised by the HR Director and Assistant HR Director. These units are employee relations, accounting, career development, compensation and network support. Each of the five specialty units are supervised by a Team Manager who reports to the Assistant Human Resources Director.

In 2001, the HR Director published Master Plan for Workforce Planning 2001. "Section D" IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY AND EMPLOYEE EFFECTIVENESS identified the following issues:

- A. "The emphasis on individual well being in the workplace is essential to effective job performance."
- B. "The necessity of effective communication among levels of county employees."

- C. "The primary function of the county's supervisory and management personnel are to work with and through non-management employees to meet the county's objectives. Fulfilling this role can be difficult when managers are selected for technical competency and seniority, not managerial skills and experience."
- D. "The effectiveness of performance appraisals to assess the potential, aptitudes or problems of county employees, and to provide employees with an incentive to improve their performance."

Findings

1. The HR Senior Management did not follow those portions of the Workforce Plan that address workplace environment, communications and employee appraisals.
2. The HR lacks definitive training programs for employees below middle management levels, with the exception of Sheriff Department, Riverside County Regional Medical Center and, Department of Public Social Services.
3. One of the Team Managers' primary functions is to meet with their assigned Administrative Managers on a regular basis. The Team Managers in HR are not communicating and collaborating with the Administrative Managers on a regular basis regarding their need for resources and information.
4. There is evidence to show that many county employees have not received evaluations and/or their evaluations were not written in the prescribed manner. This is in direct violation of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors (BOS) Policy C-21, and has been identified in several previous Riverside County Grand Jury Reports.
5. County employees subject to disciplinary actions are referred to the Employee Relations Unit, except the Sheriff's Department. There is a continuing backlog of cases that often take six (6) months or longer to be resolved. There are over two hundred cases pending resolution.

6. In 2002, a manager was promoted by the HR Director without posting and/or announcement to allow other qualified candidates to apply. This is contrary to Article V, General Provisions, Section 505, Merit Systems and the County of Riverside New Employee Handbook, reference "Merit System".
7. Allegations have been made within the HR Department, by some employees interviewed by the Grand Jury, regarding harassment and intimidation by upper management that include:
 - Chastising employees requested to appear before the Grand Jury for not revealing what they told the Grand Jury.
 - Publicly criticizing employees work product and inability to produce an acceptable work product.
 - Denying employee requests to have access to the Senior Management to air grievances, complaints and other job related concerns.

Recommendations

Riverside County Board of Supervisors
Riverside County Executive Officer
Riverside County Human Resources Director

1. Human Resources Director ensure that all county departments follow the existing Master Plan For Workforce Planning – 2001 "issues and strategies" (Section D) addressing the concerns raised by county employees in the areas of:
 - Intimidating work environment.
 - Removal of employees who demonstrate a negative attitude.
 - Issuing timely performance evaluations.
 - Promotion open to all qualified candidates based upon merit.

2. Enforce Board of Supervisors' Policy C-27, addressing harassment and workplace violence.
3. Employees disciplined for harassment and intimidation, that is documented in their personnel file and not dismissed, shall not be considered for a supervisory position until a comprehensive employee appraisal has been completed and documented in their personnel file.
4. Human Resources Director enforce existing Board of Supervisor's Policy C-21 county-wide, giving all employees the opportunity to receive:
 - Documentation of their job performance.
 - Recognition of work ethic.
 - Suggestions for improving job performance.
 - Required periodic performance evaluations.

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